

faculty of music
university of toronto

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SERIES

robert aitken, flute
john bedwith, harpsichord and piano
melvin berman, oboe
robin engelman, percussion
john hawkins, piano
kenneth knowles, trombone
victor martin, violin
vladimir orloff, continuo
william philips, trumpet
eugene plawutsky, piano
harvey sachs, conductor
ezra schabas, clarinet
george stimpson, french horn
kathy wunder, viola
john wyre, percussion

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 1972 AT 3 P.M.

CONCERT HALL, EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING

Concerto Op.24 (1934) for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Webern
Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Violin, Viola and Piano

Etwas lebhaft

Sehr langsam

Sehr rasch

Allegretto
Moderato

For Webern the internal structural elements of a composition yielded a paradox: the more restrictive they were, the more freedom he felt in the act of composition. "Full freedom has only become possible through...unexampled control," he said. Already binding himself by twelve-tone series in previous works, in the present Concerto the series is itself divided into four three-note units, closely interrelated by inversion, etc. The whole work, then, is the result of manipulations of one three-note motif B-B-flat-D. However no amount of analysis - and this is the most often analysed of all Webern's works - will be of much help to a listener without a score. As Stockhausen says "it is obvious that everything which has been and will be said about Webern's technique and style of composition will not demonstrate that he wrote beautiful music." This is not to deny the value of analysis as an aid to evaluation on aesthetic grounds. But no-one was more aware than Webern that the "mathematics" of music do not tell the whole story. The work took shape over a long period of time: first hints of it come in a letter of Webern's dating from March 1931. Webern always worked slowly and painstakingly with much heart-searching, and the present concerto proved no exception. The title indicates, much as does that of Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra, the soloistic treatment of instruments which in Webern's concerto involves a most subtle and fascinating exploitation of timbre. Webern employs the well-tried device of two faster movements surrounding a slower central movement.

Sonata for Two Pianos

Stravinsky

Moderato

Theme with Variations

Allegretto

The work was composed during 1943-44, and first performed by the composer with Nadia Boulanger in 1944 in Madison,

Wisconsin. In the broadest sense the work represents an extension of the piano duet, for the first piano part lies largely in the higher range of the instrument, the second piano part in the lower, but though this principle is evident, Stravinsky in no way ties himself to it. The first movement closely resembles classical sonata form, even to the designated repetition of the exposition. Only in the key-relationships of the various sections does Stravinsky depart from classical practice. The subsequent Theme with Variations is one of Stravinsky's most melodious compositions. The theme itself-in G major - is first presented (Largo) three times over an accompaniment that becomes progressively richer in sonority and counterpoint. There follow four well-contrasted variations, the third interesting as a quasi-fugato treatment and the fourth returning to the lyricism of the original presentation of the theme. The last movement, Allegretto, is a miniature rondo having the form ABA. The thematic material and its treatment, especially in the central section, remind us of Stravinsky's Russian origins.

Trio Sonata in G major (BWV1039)

Bach

Adagio

Allegro ma non presto

Adagio e piano

Presto

In view of the popularity of the trio-sonata as a Baroque genre, it is surprising that Bach seems to have written only four trio-sonatas and even some of these are of questionable authenticity. However the present work is certainly Bach's. Originally for two flutes and continuo, Bach later transcribed it for gamba and continuo by incorporating the second flute's part in the harpsichord part. Bach's transcription seems authority enough for today's performance in which one of the flute parts will be played on the oboe. The work is in four strongly contrasted movements. The opening Adagio, unhurried and serene, uses much canonic imitation in its structure. The exuberance of the dance-like Allegro that follows largely conceals its intricate contrapuntal writing. The next movement is strikingly Italianate, reminiscent of a Vivaldi slow movement. Over a slow-moving succession of harmonies the upper parts repeat a short sixteenth-note

figure again and again. In the concluding Presto the continuo part is no longer merely for harmonic support but becomes the third voice of a three-voice fugue.

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion

Bartok

Assai lento - Allegro molto

Lento, ma non troppo

Allegro non troppo

Having produced one masterpiece - the Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta - in 1936, Bartok followed it with another - the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion in 1937. A climactic introduction leads to the sonata form Allegro molto. There are three subjects. The development begins with an ostinato treatment of the opening motif of the introduction. It climaxes in a fortissimo recapitulation of the first subject in cloisonné canon. After the second subject has been recapitulated there follows a fugue on the third subject, providing a remarkable ending to the movement. The second movement is ternary in form, the central section being an example of the glittering nocturnal sounds - glissandi, rapid scales, chord clusters - familiar from other Bartok works. The third movement, dance-like in 2/4 meter, has as its main theme a folk-like tune which lends itself to many varied developmental procedures. Bartok treats different fragments of the theme in turn, and in between there are episodes of contrasting character, the movement thus resembling a rondo without actually being one. In earlier works Bartok had given prominence to percussion but not so much as here. After writing this sonata he pursued this particular interest no further. (M.E.)

Next Sunday Afternoon Series Concert: February 27, 1951
Artists: Robert Aitken, flute; Melvin Berman, oboe;
Anton Kuerti, piano and Victor Martin, violin.

Next Event: Sunday, January 30th - University of Toronto
Concert Band. Conductor: Prof. Robert A. Rosevear.